

Sabbatical Leave Report

Applicant: Ashley (Vaughan) Barbier (abarbier@vcccd.edu)

Discipline: Anthropology

Hired: August 2014

Sabbatical Semester: Spring 2023

Background

The general goals I set out in my sabbatical application were to 1) to refresh and to grow my expertise in medical anthropology, in particular new inter-disciplinary and intersectional approaches toward infectious disease and pandemics 2) to expand my knowledge of Covid-19 research and establish new professional networks with national and international health researchers and experts 3) to craft culturally responsive and anti-racist course materials including revised course policies (which will be incorporated into all of my courses), diverse and inclusive course content, a no-cost reading and film list, and a variety of in-class activities, assignments, lectures, and exam questions for ANTH M18 Culture, Health, and Healing, which was approved by the curriculum committee in Spring of 2021.

Objectives

Below I list more specific objectives and how I completed them.

- 1. Build relationships with faculty at USC's COVID-19 Pandemic Research Center and others working on Covid-19 and pandemics**
 - a. Due to concerns about Covid-19, I met with faculty and staff of USC's COVID-19 Research Center via Zoom rather than in person. These meetings helped me expand my knowledge of this infectious disease and provided me with connections to a new network of researchers taking intersectional approaches to health. I learned a great deal about a variety of current, ongoing research projects led by faculty research teams during these in-person meetings. For a full list of these projects and faculty lead contact information, see the following website: <https://cprc.usc.edu/studies/>
 - b. As a result of attending these meetings I gained access to survey data from a range of these studies. Such data are the basis of several in-class and online assignments and activities that I developed over the course of my sabbatical (see objectives 9 & 10).
- 2. Expand my knowledge of current local health trends and Covid-19 research, in particular, intersectional research taking racial and socio-economic disparities into account**

- a. Completed. I am now better equipped to address the pandemic and all of its impacts. Understanding this illness and its varied socio-cultural elements and effects has allowed me to remain up-to-date in my chosen field of medical anthropology.
- 3. Incorporate comparative research data from my longitudinal ethnographic project in Vanuatu—where there is a history of hesitancy towards biomedicine, vaccines, and public health recommendations—into course content and critical thinking exercises**
 - a. I was able to review some of my dissertation research and ongoing research data from Tautu, Vanuatu. I selected samples of this data to craft new lectures and in-class activities for ANTH M18. I will pilot these lectures and activities in Fall of 2024 when I teach the course for the first time. I plan to develop more lessons based on this research for additional courses after incorporating student feedback. This will be an ongoing endeavor that provides unique opportunities for students to gain experience with original anthropological research and methods.
- 4. Review culturally responsive, equity-minded, and anti-racist “best practices” and revise my policies for all of the courses I teach: ANTH M02 Cultural Anthropology; ANTH M07 Peoples and Cultures of the World; ANTH M09 Sex, Gender, and Culture; and ANTH M18 Culture, Health, and Healing**
 - a. Completed. I am piloting several of these policies this semester (Spring 2024). Email me at abarbier@vcccd.edu for a current list.
- 5. Work with our ZTC coordinator to select no-cost texts; develop a reading list and schedule for ANTH M18**
 - a. Unfortunately, our ZTC coordinator and I were unable to find no-cost textbook appropriate for this course.
 - b. As an alternative, I will be posting articles on Canvas and assigning a low-cost ethnographic text. I will work with the publisher to provide several copies to the textbook lending program for students to check out at no cost for the entire semester.
 - c. The reading list I created utilizes articles and eBooks available for free via our library.
- 6. Review films available in the *Ethnographic Film Collection* and *Kanopy* for ANTH M18**
 - a. I have reviewed the following films and added them to my course schedule:
 - i. Spite: An African Prophet-Healer (1985)
 - ii. Doctors of Two Worlds (1989)
 - iii. The Shaman’s Apprentice (2001)
 - iv. Bigger, Stronger, Faster (2008)
 - v. The Split Horn: Life of a Hmong Shaman in America (2012)
 - vi. Prescription Thugs (2015)
 - vii. Fruits of Labor (2021)
- 7. Arrange guest speakers and potential fieldtrips for ANTH M18**
 - a. MC Health Center Director Allison Case Barton

- b. MC's Raider Central Staff
- c. Staff from Friends of Fieldworkers <https://friendsoffieldworkers.org/home>
- d. More to come!

8. Develop lectures and exam questions for ANTH M18

- a. I have written lectures and exam questions on the following topics:
 - i. Field methods in medical anthropology
 - ii. Theoretical perspectives in medical anthropology
 - iii. Ethics in medical anthropology
 - iv. Healing systems (including drawing on my own experiences within the U.S. biomedical system as a person with fertility struggles and as a pregnant person receiving care)
 - v. Health disparities
 - vi. More to come!

9 & 10. Create in-class and outside course activities

- a. I designed assignments and activities on a variety of medical anthropology topics as well as activities that have students practice basic research methods. Several of these have students examine and interpret survey data from USC's COVID-19 Research Center. For a copy of the COVID-19 activities, email me at abarbier@vccd.edu.

Conclusion

My sabbatical took a "students first" mindset and addressed a range of students' interests and concerns. First, it answered students' requests for a course on medical anthropology and for highly relevant and relatable course content. Second, it answered the call for anti-racist and culturally responsive teaching, movements that both faculty and students have long been pushing for, with a renewed push in recent years. This project fulfilled the college's and district's missions of promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion by lowering the total cost of a new course and by researching and adopting "best practices" in these areas.

I am in the process of sharing the outcomes of my research with 1) the Life Sciences Department 2) the Behavioral and Social Sciences Department 3) Academic Senate 4) past and present New Faculty Orientation cohorts 5) the Student Equity and Achievement Committee 5) the Social Justice Workgroups 6) the Out/Ally Network 7) TWMOCAs and 8) the Distance Education Committee.

I look forward to teaching ANTH M18 Culture, Health, and Healing this upcoming Fall of 2024 and to continuing to develop these materials with the feedback of my students and colleagues. I thank Moorpark College and Ventura County Community College District for allowing me take advantage of what has been an extremely fruitful opportunity.